

Strategy 6: Expansion of Child Care Openings

The Navajo/Apache Regional Needs and Assets Report revealed that 18 percent of our region's children are in a child care setting that is regulated; this leaves approximately 5,300 children in unregulated child care of some type. Additionally, there are only two regulated and licensed child care centers in southern Apache County – Teddy Bear Haven in Springerville and Magical Moments in St Johns. There are no center-based care facilities in the small communities of Concho, Vernon, Alpine, or Sanders in Apache County. There are several child care centers in Navajo County, all of which are usually at capacity. There are seven licensed and regulated child care homes in the entire region. The availability of quality child care and preschool is a primary concern of this Council; the strategies that have been recommended by this Regional Council will greatly improve the network of services available for families and children within this region. However, the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council has not been able to allocate funds to increase child care or preschool openings.

Research indicates that children's outcomes are greatly affected by the quality of the program. Low-quality care can indeed have negative effects on children's development. Therefore, careful attention must be paid to the quality of program to ensure a worthwhile investment.ⁱ

Components of a high quality early care and education setting are:

- **Standards and Accountability:** High quality services have in place a system of standards and accountability such as performance or program standards, monitoring or reporting mechanisms including annual or cyclical visits by an outside assessor.
- **Ongoing assessment:** System of assessment of children's progress and program effectiveness that support individual children's learning and development, as well as programs' continuous improvementⁱⁱ
- The Council may want to require periodic developmental screening be offered to all enrolled children, using Ages and Stages, or another screening tool, accompanied with the appropriate referrals out for children who need further screening/evaluation.
- **Adult to Child Ratio:** Fewer children for each adult is better. The younger the child, the smaller the ratio: 1:4 (one adult for four infants) and 1:10 (one adult for ten preschoolers) are optimal ratios
- **Group Size:** Smaller groups are better, the younger the child, the smaller the group size. No more than 8 infants and 20 preschoolers should be in a group
- **Director Qualifications and Leadership:** Philosophy and standards are set or led by the Director. Administrative skills guide center operations.
- **Teacher/Caregiver Qualifications:** Degrees and specialized training result in better child outcomes. Staff receives continuing education.
- **Curriculum:** Well-designed, research-based, culturally and linguistically sensitive, and aligned with early learning standards (Arizona Early Learning Standards, Head Start Performance Standards); is developmentally and culturally appropriate, stimulating and intentional.

Grantees will be encouraged to become DES-certified and to accept DES payments. Sliding fee schedules could be created and implemented by grantees based on the need of the center or home, the ability of the family to pay, and the availability of other assets to offset the tuition costs.

Participating centers will be required to apply for participation in *Quality First!*

The Regional Council may want to include funding for one-time, start-up costs or capital expenditures to assist new centers or homes in completing needed expansion or remodeling. A set amount could be identified (\$50,000, for example) as a one-time expense. All of the requirements of a capital expenditure would need to be met – 50 percent match in-kind, or in cash, ongoing ownership plan and evidence of community ownership of the program.

Lead Goal: FTF will increase availability and affordability of early care and education settings.

Goal: FTF will improve access to quality early care and education programs and settings.

Goal: FTF will increase the availability, quality and diversity of relevant resources that support language and literacy development for young children and their families.

Key Measures:

1. Percentage of families of children birth through age five who report they maintain language- and literacy-rich home environments (e.g. children hear language throughout the day, children have opportunities for listening and talking with family members, books and other literacy tools and materials are available and accessible to children).
2. Total number of children enrolled and vacancies in regulated early care and education programs as a proportion of total population birth to age five.
3. Ratio of children referred and found eligible for early intervention.
4. Total number of early care and education programs participating in the QIRS system.

Target Population:

Children two weeks through five years of age, region wide, with a focus on communities where center-based child care does not currently exist.

Proposed Service Numbers	SFY2010	SFY2011	SFY2012
	July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010	July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011	July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012
	25 additional child care slots	25 additional child care slots	25 additional child care slots 3-yr. total = 75 additional child care slots

Performance Measures SFY 2010-2012

1. Number of children served at target quality level/Proposed service number
2. Number of ethnic or low socio-economic level children at early care centers/Actual service number
3. Number of quality early care and education programs/Proposed service number
4. Number of children screened/Proposed service number

5. Number of new family child care homes providing care for infants and toddlers/Proposed service number	
How is this strategy building on the service network that currently exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 7 DES-licensed child care homes, and 18 DES-licensed child care centers in the region. • This strategy will create additional high-quality child care slots within the region. 	
What are the opportunities for collaboration and alignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families in the region who would like to do this work, but need guidance and support • Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are available to use as models for new programs • Northland Pioneer College is an available resource for education and professional development • S*CCEEDS trainers are available in the region to provide staff and parent trainings, free of charge 	
SFY2010 Expenditure Plan for Proposed Strategy (How much of the total allocation will go to this strategy)	
Population-based Allocation for proposed strategy	\$275,000 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING REQUEST
Budget Justification: \$200,000 = (\$8000 x 25 openings) Baseline amount per child, per year, for full-time, full-day, full-year care. \$ 50,000: Allocation for capital investment (subject to 50 percent match requirements) <u>\$ 25,000</u> : Administrative home costs \$275,000 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING REQUEST	

ⁱ Manhattan Institute, *"Pre-K: Shaping the System That Shapes Children"*, 2006
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill, *"Quality of Child Care Affects Language Development"*, 2007
Set for Success: Building a Strong Foundation for School Readiness Based on the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children," Kauffman Early Education Exchange
Good Quality Child Care: A Dramatic Opportunity to Promote Learning and Prevent Damage in Our Youngest Children," Child Care Action Campaign, 1996